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Management Officer, CIA

Assistant Director, ORE

Utilization of the Industrial Card File

REFERENCE: Memorandum from Management Officer to AD/ORE of 18 May 1950,  
subject: Industrial Card File

1. In ORE the most frequent customer of the Industrial Card File and the Industrial Register is the Eastern Europe/USSR Division which states that it requests material or service from the Industrial Register about 60 times per month. This figure is purely an estimate as no records are kept by D/EE on this subject. Other divisions of ORE have had little or no use of IR or the Industrial Card File and some divisions anticipate no future use. A general breakdown is as follows:

a. D/EE - The Industrial Register acts as a clearing house for all plant information, much of which is not routed to ORE. It would be virtually impossible for D/EE to distribute, classify and file the volume of plant information for future analysis. IR publications are useful as they present a general picture of the geographical concentrations of industry and provide a ready reference to work with the plant cards. D/EE is required to set up limited files on evaluated plant lists because IR information is often behind times and unevaluated.

b. D/NE - Has not used, however considers service of potential value

c. D/WE - Occasional use, once every three or four months. D/WE would normally depend on supporting agencies for IR type of basic data. IR publications to date have been of no value to D/WE.

d. D/FE - About five calls per month. More useful if commodity classification were included. IR publications of no use to D/FE.

e. D/LA - Occasional use, for Argentina only. Helpful in furnishing important details.

f. D/No - No use. Anticipates no use.

g. D/In - No use. Anticipates no use.

h. D/Tr - Very little use generally. So far has used only in regard to merchant shipbuilding. Does not meet other needs.

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i. D/Ec - Certain branches have used, but only occasionally. D/Ec depends on other agencies for this type of information. IR can offer no help on international concerns.

j. D/Ge - Use varies with individual analysts. Maximum for analyst about once every three or four weeks.

k. D/Ma - Approximately one request per month. No new information is obtained but information is in usable form.

(It is estimated that D/EE uses the Industrial Register about 8 times as much as all other ORE regional divisions combined.)

3. a. The Industrial Register in some cases supplies information not otherwise available, while in other cases it fails to supply information known by ORE to exist. For example, the IR has not supplied information on the subject of East-West Trade. This type of information can be found in usable form at present only in the files of ORE analysts responsible for the intelligence coverage of this subject. (It should be mentioned that IR was requested to include information required for intelligence treatment of East-West Trade about one year ago) Also, it has been found that the IR is frequently behind times in getting information into its files.

b. There is also the question of whether the information available through the IR, that is not otherwise available, is required for ORE analytical purposes. Some ORE divisions have reported that the IR does supply information not available, from other reference sources, but that it is too basic for their use. This would be true, of course, for most of the non-Soviet Orbit divisions which do not have large economic staffs and are not required to maintain detailed information concerning their areas.

4. a. The Industrial Register does serve as a repository of industrial information making unnecessary the maintenance of like data in analyst's files. It should be noted in clarification, however, that many non-Soviet-Orbit areas probably would not maintain much detailed information even if there were no Industrial Register. Also, the IR existence does not preclude filing by some specialized components of ORE (e.g. Economics Branch, D/EE) because:

- (1) The IR material is not evaluated
- (2) The material is not coded to fit specific needs
- (3) Requests sometimes are not answered in time to serve intelligence requirements
- (4) IR often does not have all information because of time lag in getting information on record
- (5) IR does not have all types of information available to ORE
- (6) IR information is often not the type of information that ORE would have abstracted.

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b. At present, ORE divisions maintain files of:

- (1) Important current materials
- (2) Certain important evaluated summaries, reports, etc.
- (3) Any materials considered to be immediately useful
- (4) Notes that analysts have made from important industrial reports which are critical or immediately useful.

5. Generally speaking, IR supplements information maintained by analysts by:

- a. Retaining information analysts have not had time to analyze
- b. Coding details such as specific installations, etc., which would not be kept by analysts
- c. Coding information from documents which for one reason or another do not reach analysts.

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NOTE: Information maintained by analysts is interpreted to mean not only the working files kept by analysts, but also the current knowledge that they must of course keep in their minds, together with certain basic reference manuals, trade logs, etc., that must always be within arm's reach. Many analysts in non-Soviet-Orbit countries believe that they do not need an Industrial Register provided that an adequate reference library is available with all information under one roof.

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6. The Industrial Register provides a check by which analysts can determine if their information is complete, subject to the fact that ORE has access to information not on IR records. Also, it has been found that the IAC agencies can give more complete coverage to many subjects, especially from an historical outlook.

7. An assessment of the current or potential value of IR to ORE is difficult to estimate because the purpose of IR has never been specifically stated. This greatly restricts utilization of IR by ORE because:

- a. So far no primary customer has been named, or, in other words, IR is not oriented toward servicing particular intelligence needs (agency, office, subject, area, developments, etc.) so that adequate guidance and direction can be provided and necessary supervision exercised.

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b. Due to its lack of direction the IR naturally attempts to satisfy all requesters (those requiring general information - those requiring detailed information - those requiring special coverage by area or subject, etc.) and as a result adequately satisfies no one. For example: ORE Soviet Orbit analysts remark that the IR is coding certain information which they consider unnecessary and not covering other aspects considered to be of importance. At the same time, Western Europe analysts complain the IR information is too basic in nature while Northern Division analysts because of adequate official reports see no use for an IR based upon their requirements for industrial information.

c. The information contained in IR is not evaluated and therefore cannot be used without analytical treatment that may require reading the basic documents.

d. The IR does not have the facilities for preparing synthesized reports, nor the competence required, unless it is trained to meet specific intelligence and production needs.

8. In conclusion, ORE feels that the Industrial Register, while being far from adequate, to meet ORE's production needs, does provide a valuable service by:

- a. Acting as a central repository
- b. Filing information in a manner which meets some of ORE's needs
- c. Consolidating information relative to individual industrial plants
- d. Ferreting out sources of industrial information
- e. Keeping numerous details of possible use in basic studies which the analysts could not keep even if they analyzed all data and prepared their own files.

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